



OPINION

For the Dissertation of a PhD-student at the
Cyrillo-Methodian Research Centre at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

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Scientific supervisor: **Prof. Dima Češmedžiev**

Entitled:

**The economic development of the Bulgarian lands according to the Cyrillic
sources from XIII-XIV centuries**

For obtaining the educational and scientific degree “**Doctor**” (PhD)

In the Professional Field: 2.1. Philology
Scientific specify: Theory and History of Literature

The dissertation of Teodora Georgieva is dedicated to an intriguing and as if slightly forgotten recently by our historiography problem, related to the economic development of the Bulgarian lands during the Middle Ages. The chosen topic is quite extensive and confronts the researcher with complex questions directly related to the economy and everyday life of Bulgarians during the 13th – 14th centuries.

Georgieva's dissertation consists of 334 pages, and the exposition includes an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography and an appendix consisting of a glossary, illustrative material and diagrams. The main structural units are divided into separate paragraphs and in this way, the various aspects involved in the examination of the problematic, are formulated.

The study begins with a lengthy introduction, turning into an ambitious request for a broad research dedicated to the economic development of the Bulgarian lands during the 13th–14th centuries and based mainly on the Cyrillic historical sources. The introduction clarifies the chosen chronological framework as well as the research methodology. The overall structure of the dissertation is also presented here. An overview of the character and content of the Cyrillic written sources, on which the work is based, was also made, and a peculiar genre characteristic of the sources was presented. An overview of the nature and content of the Cyrillic written sources was made and a peculiar genre characteristic of the historical evidences. It is clear from

the introduction that the PhD-student knows a significant part of the scientific literature related to the researched topic.

The first chapter is entitled *„Правно-политически рамки на българската икономика (XIII – XIV век)“*. This part of the dissertation aims to present the legal framework of the Bulgarian economy and reflects the role of the state as a factor in economic development. In this part of the exhibition, special attention is paid to the ruler charters, bilateral contracts, as well as some legal texts. The chapter examines: the ruling institute and the fiscal administration; revenues and expenses to the treasury, the issue of the tax cadastre; the legal regulation of the property, types of property and the incomes, etc. The work also pays special attention to the monasteries as economic units. In this chapter of the dissertation, the PhD-student draws the true conclusion that the state is one of the main factors in economic life and it is among the key elements that regulating the economic processes during the considered era.

The second chapter of the dissertation is dedicated to *„Аграрната икономика на Средновековна България според кирилските паметници“*. This part of the work examines the agrarian economy, which, as a PhD-student Georgieva notes, occupies a privileged place in the economic life of medieval Bulgaria. The emphasis in this part of the study is placed on the information about the natural-geographical data; the descriptions of the "Bulgarian land" are revealed, as well as the natural disasters, but also the fears faced by the medieval man. The work presents the demographic processes and at the same time the structure, organization and development of agricultural production is reflected. The text of the dissertation outlines not only the individual aspects of the economic development of the Bulgarian state during the XIII-XIV centuries, but also connects the topic of the economy with that of everyday life.

The third chapter concerns the so-called urban economy and is entitled: *„Занаятчийското производство според старобългарски, византийски и западноевропейски текстове“*. The emphasis in this part of the research is placed on the discovery of the city as a centre of craft production and commercial activity. An overview of the urban network on the Bulgarian lands was made and at the same time, the main points for carrying out goods and exchanges were outlined. In this part of the dissertation is raised the question of city management, as well as the terminology affecting persons engaged in craft activities. At the end of the chapter is made a conclusion that mainly raw materials are exported from Bulgarian lands – grain, wax and honey, and craft production is of secondary importance for foreign trade.

The last chapter of the research is dedicated to „Обмяна, търговия и пазари по българските земи през XIII–XIV в. според кирилските наметници“. It is of greatest interest to me, as it reflects the forms of trade and exchange of goods in the Bulgarian lands in the 13th–14th centuries. T. Georgieva reveals the main aspects of the development of internal and external trade carried out in medieval Bulgaria, as well as the factors that influence the growth of commodity-money relations. The question of income arising from commercial activity was followed up, at the same time a review was made of imported and exported products, as well as of the coin circulation. The PhD-student pays special attention to the overland trade in the Bulgarian territories carried out during the considered period mainly from Ragusa. The role of the maritime republics of Venice and Genoa, as well as trade relations with Wallachia, Moldavia and Brasov, are examined.

The conclusion of the dissertation reflects the main content of the work in a systematized form. Along with this, however, it should reveal more clearly and categorically the hypotheses, opinions and conclusions that the doctoral student reaches in the process of his work.

I would also like to make some remarks and comments on the text of the dissertation. First – in the case of a future publication of the dissertation, the text must be carefully refined, as there are certain semantic inaccuracies in some places. Special emphasis will be placed on the use of historical sources and literature related to the topic of study. Regarding the written testimonies, I will note that attention should also be paid to other sources, and not primarily to the Cyrillic ones. It is worth tracing the content of some of the texts published in the series *Archive de l'Athos u Cmapy cpncкu apxue*. This will allow interesting comparisons to be made, from which the similarities and differences will become apparent, as well as the development of the processes related to economic life in Bulgaria and the Balkans during the period under consideration. The mentioned sources will enrich the text of the dissertation and turn the study into a complete monograph. Regarding the literature, it should be updated and some of the recently published monographs related to the topic should be mentioned in the dissertation. Some older but important studies should also be added.

After this brief overview of T. Georgieva's dissertation, I would like to emphasize that we are presented with a voluminous work, from which it is clear that the PhD-student knows the historical facts and issues related to the chosen topic. The study, although it is based on the specialty: *"Theory and History of Literature"*, has an interdisciplinary character and is based, apart from the already mentioned Cyrillic written sources from the 13th - 14th centuries but also on the achievements of archaeology, numismatics and art studies.

The scientific contributions stand out in the dissertation. First of all – the work presents the development of the medieval Bulgarian economy in the period XIIIth – XIVth centuries (mainly on the basis of Cyrillic sources). The study examines the different directions in the economy – agricultural activity, craft production and trade, etc. The development of craft activity in the Bulgarian lands is presented through a comparative analysis of texts from other Balkan countries (Rashka, Wallachia, etc.). Last but not least, it should be pointed out that in the study was made an attempt to track: the domestic market, participation in international exchange, revenues to the treasury, the main export and import goods, etc. A conceptual apparatus with the main economic terms was also compiled.

The abstract reflects the content of the dissertation and meets the requirements. The PhD-student has also presented a list of a total of six publications, two of them are in print (forthcoming).

The procedure for announcing the contest is in accordance with the legal provisions and requirements. All of the above and the fact that the dissertation meets the necessary basic requirements give me the reason to give my positive assessment. I would like to recommend to the esteemed Scientific Board to award *Teodora Krasimirova Georgieva* the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”-PhD.

Sofia, September the 9th, 2023

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